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Using research to identify teaching and learning innovations that will better prepare nursing students for professional practice

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Abstract

In Australia, data is collected by universities across students' institutional tenure to measure and monitor student learning, engagement and experience (DEEWR 2009). This data is often used to assess the performance of a subject, course, faculty or university and also to inform potential marketing materials and campaigns. However, there is very little data (if any) collected to enable universities to assess how well their educational programmes are preparing students for professional practice. This paper is based on a pilot study that aimed to address this gap by asking recent university graduates to provide some feedback on how their undergraduate nursing education programme could better prepare them for professional practice.

Keywords

prepare, nursing, research, students, identify, professional, practice, teaching, learning, innovations, that, will, better

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Using research to identify teaching and learning innovations that will better prepare nursing students for professional practice

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Abstract

In Australia, data is collected by universities across students' institutional tenure to measure and monitor student learning, engagement and experience (DEEWR 2009). This data is often used to assess the performance of a subject, course, faculty or university and also to inform potential marketing materials and campaigns. However, there is very little data (if any) collected to enable universities to assess how well their educational programmes are preparing students for professional practice. This paper is based on a pilot study that aimed to address this gap by asking recent university graduates to provide some feedback on how their undergraduate nursing education programme could better prepare them for professional practice.

A design-based research methodology (Reeves, Herrington & Oliver 2005) has been adopted for a wider faculty project and this pilot study is the first phase of this broader initiative. In this initial phase, interviews were facilitated with ex-nursing students who had completed their undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing university degree in 2009 or 2010 and who were currently employed as health-care professionals. Semi-structured interview questions were designed to explore students'

opinions on how the undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing programme could be enhanced. The interview findings were validated and further developed through additional quantitative and qualitative research.

The findings from these research investigations illuminated some manageable innovations that could be made to enhance the teaching and learning curriculum of undergraduate nursing students. This paper will provide details of the pilot study and present a synopsis of the findings from the research investigation. Recommendations for enhancing teaching and learning in the undergraduate programme and ensure that the nursing students are well prepared for professional practice will be discussed. Additionally, the paper will describe strategies that are being implemented in response to the outcomes of this pilot study.

Intended learning outcomes

At the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- present an overview of the research undertaken to facilitate the investigation of nursing graduates' opinions on how an undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing programme could be enhanced
- present the findings of research undertaken to investigate how teaching and learning in an undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing programme could be enhanced
- describe strategies that have been adopted in light of findings from an investigation of how teaching and learning in an undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing programme can be enhanced.

Recommended reading

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 2009, Indicator framework for higher education performance funding, discussion paper, December 2009, viewed 5 October 2011, <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Documents/HIEDPerformanceFunding.pdf>
- Nelson, M 2002, 'Education for professional nursing practice: Looking backward into the future', *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, vol. 7, no. 3, viewed 7 October 2011, www.nursing-world.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume72002/No2May2002/EducationforProfessionalNursingPractice.aspx
- Reeves, TC, Herrington, J & Oliver, R 2005, 'Design research: A socially responsible approach to instructional technology research in higher education', *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 96-115.

Biography

Dr Dominique Parrish in her role has responsibility for Faculty learning and teaching strategy, policy and practice and enhancing student experience, outcomes and engagement. She has lead numerous initiatives designed to promote

equitable and positive student learning experiences and sound learning and teaching practices. Dominique has over 25 years experience working in the education sector and a wealth of practical experience in adult education. Dominique founded Learning Achievements and Solutions, a business that delivered services including policy and resource development, strategic planning workshops, online learning and web-based training, project management and organisational research such as staff and client satisfaction reviews.